Fire in Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust, Mumbai

1280. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a fire took place in Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust, Mumbai, on the night of 29th-30th December, 1996; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) Yes, Sir. A fire broke out in Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust in bulk Handling system at around 2000 hrs. on 29th December, 1996.

(b) Enquiry conducted by the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust has revealed that the fire at the Port resulted from the ignition of sulphur being transferred from conveyor belt to the sulphur storage shed.

Development of National Highways in 9th Five Year Plan

1281. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to lay greater emphasis on the development of National Highways in 9th Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the fund earmarked therefor; and

(c) the details of the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Ninth Five Year Plan is yet to be finalised and it is too early to give the details of funds earmarked.

(c) A new policy guidelines for the speedy development of National Highways has recently been approved.

Development of Inland Waerways Transport

1282. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to implement measures for the faster development of Inland Waterways Transport;

(b) whether the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and some other Government organisations have given some suggestions to the Government in the matter;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKAT-RAMAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) has submitted certain suggestions concerning development of IWT to Government.

(c) Requisite information is given in Statement *(See* below).

(d) The matter is being processed.

Statement

List of Suggestions made by FICCI on Development of IWT

1. Inland Water Transport (IWT) should be notified in the Official Gazette as "infrastructure facility by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBTD) so that the concessions as per provisions of 80-IA of Income Tax Act, 1961 are made available in the case of Inland Water facilities Section 80-IA(12)(Ca) as substituted by the Finance Act, 1995 effective from 1.4.1996 excerpt given below permits is-sues of such notification.

Section 80 IA, Sub 'Section 12 (Ca)

"Infrastructure facility" means a road, highway, bridge, airport, port, rail system or any other pub--lie facility of a similar nature as

may be notified by the Board in this behalf in the Official Gazette".

2. Sectors identified for permitting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and for according automatic approval of 75% foreign equity should also include IWT system.

3. Inland Water Transport Industry and the Inland Water Transport Services Industry should be considered and notified for the grant of automatic approval for foreign equity.

4. IWT sector should be declared as industry. The infrastructure sectors like Roads, Ports have already been declared as industry and facilities like borrowing on easy terms as available for those sectors should be extended to IWT also.

5. IWT sector may have to be assigned *a* suitable rank for approval of specific projects relating to National Waterways and other Waterways.

6. In order to encourage investment into IWT sector, grant of certain built in concessions like Development Rebate or Investment Allowance for IWT sector may have to be considered.

7. The present ship building capacity is limited to meet the expected demand for new vessels. The restriction oh import of vessels need to be removed.

8. Customs duty on import of spare parts of vessels may be abolished so that the operating/maintenance cost is kept at par with the international level in so far as the cost of spare parts is concerned.

9. Agencies of Government may come farward to announce offer of assured cargo on a long term basis, so that the private investor will be encouraged to invest in the vessels and also in other facilities.

10. Development of adequate training facilities for the crew personnel by setting up an independent Training Institution was emphasised so that continuous training is made available.

11. More of partnership arrangements between Public Sector beneficiaries and private investors will be desirable.

12. Development of tourism in the river region should be taken up in consultation with tourism development organisations.

13. Passenger traffic and development of modernised vessels is to be taken up for optimum utilisation of the available waterways and to relieve the pressure on road/rail facilities.

14. More frequent interaction on a regular basis between Government, operators and users is recommended. These meetings and consultations will lead to creation of positive policy making environment.

15. Setting up of a Task Force for studying the feasibility of select waterways, and suggest suitable strategy for development of Inland Water Transport system was recommended.

Dedicated and Product Specific Ports

1283. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the dedicated and product specific ports in operation in the country;

(b) the names of such ports; and

(c) the details of other product specific or dedicated ports under active consideration?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKAT-RAMAN): (a) All the Major ports in the country are generally handling all types of cargo. There are no dedicated and product specific ports in operation in the country.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) There is no such proposal under active consideration.